

Sunday Readings

13th August 2017

Collect

Almighty ever-living God,
whom, taught by the Holy Spirit,
we dare to call our Father,
bring, we pray, to perfection in our hearts
the spirit of adoption as your sons and daughters,
that we may merit to enter into the inheritance
which you have promised.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the
Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

FIRST READING

A reading from the first book of the Kings

19:9,11-13

When Elijah reached Horeb, the mountain of the Lord, he went into the cave and spent the night in it. Then he was told, 'Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord.' Then the Lord himself went by. There came a mighty wind, so strong it tore the mountains and shattered the rocks before the Lord. But the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind came an earthquake. But the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire. But the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire there came the sound of a gentle breeze. And when Elijah heard this, he covered his face with his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.

The word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 84:9-14 R/. v.8

R/. Let us see, O Lord, your mercy, and give us your saving help.

I will hear what the Lord God has to say,
a voice that speaks of peace.
His help is near for those who fear him
and his glory will dwell in our land. **R/.**

Mercy and faithfulness have met;
justice and peace have embraced.
Faithfulness shall spring from the earth
and justice look down from heaven. **R/.**

The Lord will make us prosper
and our earth shall yield its fruit.
Justice shall march before him
and peace shall follow his steps. **R/.**



SECOND READING

A reading from the letter of St Paul
to the Romans

9:1-5

What I want to say now is no pretence; I say it in union with Christ – it is the truth – my conscience in union with the Holy Spirit assures me of it too. What I want to say is this: my sorrow is so great, my mental anguish so endless, I would willingly be condemned and be cut off from Christ if it could help my brothers of Israel, my own flesh and blood. They were adopted as sons, they were given the glory and the covenants; the Law and the ritual were drawn up for them, and the promises were made to them. They are descended from the patriarchs and from their flesh and blood came Christ who is above all, God for ever blessed! Amen.

The word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Gospel Acclamation

Lk 19:38

Alleluia, alleluia!
Blessings on the King who comes,
in the name of the Lord!
Peace in heaven
and glory in the highest heavens!
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Matthew 14:22-33

The Lord be with you. *And with your Spirit.*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.
Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side while he would send the crowds away. After sending the crowds away he went up into the hills by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, while the boat, by now far out on the lake, was battling with a heavy sea, for there was a head-wind. In the fourth watch of the night he went towards them, walking on the lake, and when the disciples saw him walking on the lake they were terrified. 'It is a ghost' they said, and cried out in fear. But at once Jesus called out to them, saying, 'Courage! It is I! Do not be afraid.' It was Peter who answered. 'Lord,' he said 'if it is you, tell me to come to you across the water.' 'Come' said Jesus. Then Peter got out of the boat and started walking towards Jesus across the water, but as soon as he felt the force of the wind, he took fright and began to sink. 'Lord! Save me!' he cried. Jesus put out his hand at once and held him. 'Man of little faith,' he said 'why did you doubt?' And as they got into the boat the wind dropped. The men in the boat bowed down before him and said, 'Truly, you are the Son of God.'

The Gospel of the Lord,
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

The Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary Year A

the word of god

saint of the week

Monday 14 August 2017

St Maximilian Kolbe (1894 - 1941)

“If Peter had not taken the risk, he would never have learnt the meaning of faith. The road to faith passes through obedience to the call of Jesus. Unless a definite step is demanded, the call vanishes into thin air, and if men imagine that they can follow Jesus without taking this step, they are deluding themselves like fanatics...For faith is only real when there is obedience, never without it, and faith only becomes faith in the act of obedience.” (Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, p.63-64)

“Faith is only real where there is obedience.” That hurts a little. That is a little demanding of God don’t you think? Surely there is a way I can have faith in God and not have to obey him all the time. There has to be a way I can skirt that issue or at least amend it. God is demanding a lot if “faith is only real where there is obedience.” Cannot I not simply believe and that be good enough for God?

When Peter gets out of the boat he is being obedient to Christ’s calling. Peter wanted to do everything that Jesus did, like a good student of a rabbi. He hears the call, “Come,” and leaves the comfort of the boat.

Bonhoeffer’s words hurt but they are true. Faith without obedience is not faith. We can believe in Christ but if we are not willing to follow Christ’s call our faith is null and void. If we ignore the calling that Christ is laying on our hearts, our faith has become useless. To get the full sense, power and purpose of faith, we have to take it out of the closet, dust it off, and use it by being obedient to the one who is calling us.

prayer of the week

A Summer Prayer

Father, Creator of all, thank You for summer!
Thank you for the warmth of the sun
and the increased daylight.
Thank You for the beauty I see all around me
and for the opportunity to be outside and enjoy
Your creation.
Thank You for the increased time I have to be with
my friends and family, and for the more casual
pace of the summer season.
Draw me closer to You this summer.
Teach me how I can pray no matter where I am or
what I am doing.
Warm my soul with the awareness of Your presence
and light my path with Your Word and Counsel.
As I enjoy Your creation, create in me
a pure heart and a hunger and a thirst for You.

He was born on 8 January 1894 in occupied Poland: he joined the Franciscans in Lwów in 1910, and was ordained eight years later, as his country became free and independent for the first time in over 120 years.

He believed that the world was passing through a time of intense spiritual crisis, and that Christians must fight for the world’s salvation with all the means of modern communication. He founded a newspaper, and a sodality called the Knights of Mary Immaculate, which spread widely both in Poland and abroad.

In 1927 he founded a community, a “city of Mary,” at Teresin: centred round the Franciscan friary, it attracted many lay people, and became self-supporting, publishing many periodicals and running its own radio station.

In 1930 he went to Japan, studied Buddhism and Shintoism, and through the Japanese edition of his newspaper spread the Christian message in a way that was in harmony with Japanese culture. In Nagasaki, he set up a “Garden of the Immaculate,” which survived the atomic bomb.

He also travelled to Malabar and to Moscow, but was recalled to Poland in 1936 for reasons of health.

When the Germans invaded in 1939, the community at Teresin sheltered thousands of refugees, most of them Jews.

In 1941 he was arrested and sent to the concentration camp at Auschwitz, where he helped and succoured the inmates. In August of that year a prisoner escaped, and in reprisal the authorities were choosing ten people to die by starvation. One of the men had a family, and Maximilian Kolbe offered to take his place. The offer was accepted, and he spent his last days comforting his fellow prisoners.

The man he saved was present at his canonization.



Maximilian Kolbe’s martyrdom is the least important thing about him. We are none of us likely to find ourselves in a position to emulate his sacrifice, and speculation as to the heroic way in which we would have behaved in his place is a pernicious waste of time. What is important is that he acted the way he did because of who he was – or, rather, because of who he had become. It is because of who he had become that we revere him as a saint: he would have been a saint (though perhaps not canonized) even if he had not been martyred. And that process of becoming is something we can all emulate. We can all become people for whom doing the right thing is obvious, natural, and easy. It requires no heroism, no special gifts: just perseverance, and prayer.